

## *Reviews and Bibliographical Notices.*

### I.—ASYLUM REFORM IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

#### REPORT ON THE STATE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF NEW YORK.

Communicated by the Comptroller to the State Senate, April 9, 1879. Albany: *The Argus Company*. 1879. 60 pages.

In his annual report for the year 1878, to the Legislature, the Comptroller presents the clearest proof that "reform upon the canals has been real," by a comparison of their cost to the State under the old system of management by three commissioners, and the new one of a single superintendent of public works. It is enough to say, in this place, that although the new system had been in operation only one-half that year, the cost of the canals for the year was \$310,580.71 less than in 1877. The economical results of a similar change in prison management are even more astonishing. They show a saving to the State, on account of the prisons, of \$474,408.02 in the expenditures of 1878 as compared with those of 1876.

There remains the department of State charities, into which reform has not yet been introduced. That this reform should have been the last to be undertaken, and that it should promise to be the most difficult of all, is a sad commentary upon our vaunted Christian civilization. Certainly the sick, the insane, the blind, and the deaf-mute have the first and highest claim upon public sympathy and protection. And even in a financial point of view, the department of charities is more important than that of the prisons. Within the last decade, more than four millions have been expended for construction, and for repairs and improvements, upon the four hospital asylums of the State alone. This money has been asked for upon false pretenses, gained by lobbying and log-rolling, and expended by the same class of men—in many cases by the same men—who have robbed the State of hundreds of millions in the construction and repair of its canals. The asylums are the last strongholds which remain to these corrupt rings, and a desperate defense of them may well be anticipated. Several millions will be required to complete those not yet completed, and there is no limit to the sums which may be drawn from the State treasury on account of repairs and improvements to them. Besides these are the annual sums to be expended for their maintenance accounts. The current expenses of all the State charitable institutions amount to more than \$1,000,000 annually, and it is expected that the joint expenses of the canals and prisons for the current year will be less than this sum.

But asylum reform has other objects than economy, essential as that undoubtedly is, both as an end and as a means to more important ends. Some of these are discussed in the comptroller's report on the State charitable institutions, and with an ability and thoroughness really surprising when the brief time permitted for their study is considered. Other writers, official and unofficial, have also contributed to the subject during the past year, and we shall take the present opportunity to give a brief resumé of the progress of this reform in the State of New York for that period.

First in order of time comes the eleventh annual report of the State Board of Charities, published in the spring of 1878. This report is important as marking the first successful effort of the Board towards practical reform in the charitable institutions of the State. The "perplexing and arduous labor" of an investigation of the State Institution for the Blind, at Batavia, was thoroughly performed, with results which may be briefly stated. The duties of its managers were found to have been entirely neglected. Its business methods were of the loosest kind, its financial accounts deceptive, and its expenditures extravagant and corrupt. As an important step in reform, the Board recommend that its administration be made a unit, by giving the entire control of its affairs to the superintendent, instead of dividing it with the steward, as heretofore. "Anything like division of authority in such an organization," say the Board, "must inevitably produce confusion and disorder." This is the theory of the administration of our State lunatic asylums. Nothing like division of authority is known in them, and this principle has been carried so far as to permit the superintendent to choose his managers, as well as all his subordinate officers. Yet the hospital asylums of New York stand convicted of enormous extravagance, deceptive accounts, and other abuses, extending over a period of years. The truth no doubt is, that where the management is entirely formal, as in this country, unity of administration is the surest means for making the commission of abuses easy, and their detection difficult. In Great Britain, on the other hand, where there is a real management of asylums by local managers, it is made the more easy and effective by a division of administrative responsibility between the medical officers, steward, and matron. But a real management of State asylums by local Boards is clearly impossible with us, and we believe, with the Comptroller, that these Boards should be abolished, and the French system adopted, in which supreme authority is given to a single officer, who is made directly responsible to one of the departments of the State government.

As we should expect, after its ten years' careful study of the various problems relating to the insane, the State Board is able to present much of interest and value in its report. Upon one point, however, it has adopted from the lunacy specialists a series of fallacies, which are a blot upon an otherwise excellent docu-

ment. This is the argument in favor of the "curative policy" in providing for the public insane. The Board urge the treatment of all the acute insane in curative hospitals, lest they "lose the benefits of treatment during the period of the disease offering the greatest promise of recovery, and thus pass into the chronic stage of insanity." Thus far the argument is sound, and may be fairly used to induce that prompt removal of insane persons to the care and control of an asylum, which, in a large majority of cases, their own good and public safety demand. But this is all there is any warrant in science for claiming in behalf of the policy of early treatment in insanity. We regret to say, there is no foundation in facts, or in admitted authority, for the following statements from the report of the Board :

"Although differences of opinion exist among scientists as to the curability of insanity, it is reasonably certain from statistics upon the subject that fifty per cent. of the acute insane will recover when they are placed promptly under appropriate medical treatment. If a period of six months intervenes without such treatment the ratio of recoveries will be reduced to, and probably fall below, thirty-five per cent. The prospects of cure are greatly diminished as the disease progresses without treatment, the chances of recovery after two years' duration of the insanity being only about seven per cent."

We need hardly remark that there is no difference of opinion whatever among scientists as to the curability of insanity by medical treatment. Nothing is known of its curability by medicines, nor is any such knowledge claimed by a single authority. An articulate theory, even, of this cure has never been propounded. There is no more ground, then, for saying that "fifty per cent. of the acute insane will recover when they are placed promptly under appropriate medical treatment," than for saying that the same proportion will recover if medicines are carefully withheld from them. The cases of insanity which recover are nearly all those which cannot be connected with bodily disease, and their treatment by medicines is therefore wholly irrational. Certainly, no mechanical or chemical agent has been found capable of changing unhealthy into healthy thought and feeling, and experiments with these agents upon the insane are an abuse which should be denounced by every humane physician. It is true, indeed, that a large proportion of the insane who do not recover before the end of six months do not recover at all. But as this is at least as true of those who have not, as of those who have been treated with medicines, nothing is proved.

In a paragraph following that which we have quoted a calculation, based upon the easy curability of insanity in its early stages, is made to show a loss to the community of at least \$70,000 for every one hundred insane who fail to receive medical treatment in the acute stage of their disorder. Two years are allowed for a cure in each case, at a cost of \$250 per year, and against this is reckoned the cost of providing for the larger num-

ber of incurables where treatment has been neglected. Given the number of acute cases occurring in a certain period, and "the economic benefits secured to the public by proper medical treatment may readily be computed." To this the writer naively adds: "The mere statement of these facts bears its own commentary, and argument seems unnecessary to form proper conclusions regarding the matter."

It is hardly worth while to note that on the basis of the data assumed, the "economic benefits" are given at double their true amount, in this report. But that an argument so thoroughly unsound in its facts and assumptions should be found incorporated in the report of a Board made up in great part of scholars and philanthropists, is almost incredible. We can only suppose that this portion of the document was prepared by some new members whose knowledge of the subject had been wholly derived from the annual reports of our lunatic asylums.

And here we may pause to inquire, how it is that the medical writers of these reports are permitted to retain their standing in a profession whose code of ethics they so constantly and grossly violate? The argument above described is repeated year after year in nearly every asylum report in this country. Suppose these gentlemen should advertise, at their own expense and for the benefit of their private practice, that "it is reasonably certain from statistics that fifty per cent." of all acute cases of bronchitis will recover if "placed promptly under appropriate medical treatment;" and that "the ratio of recoveries will be reduced to, and probably fall below, thirty-five per cent." if such treatment be delayed for six months. We know very well that fifty per cent. of the acute cases reported as cured would have been cases of a common catarrh, with a natural duration of from one to two weeks; while sixty-five per cent. and upwards of the six months' cases would have terminated in a consumption, no matter at how early a stage their treatment was begun. There is no need to say how prompt and severe would be the discipline applied to such advertisers. And yet these curers of consumption "in its early stages" are more excusable than the medical superintendents whose stock advertising argument the Board of Charities have unfortunately adopted. It has been found that certain medical agents are competent to bring about certain physical and dynamical changes in the tissues, temperature, pulse, etc., of the sick, which have been followed, at least temporarily, by improvement in the rational symptoms. How easy for the general practitioner, urged by the necessity of bread-winning, and by the eager self-deception of his patient, to deceive himself in respect to the curative effects of medicines! But, as we have seen, there is no reasonable excuse for this self-deception in the treatment of insanity in public institutions. The argument for its curability by medicines is absurd in theory, and supported in statistics only by such fallacies as we have exposed. Those who have devised it, moreover, are servants of

the State, bound to their responsible duties by the highest obligations, and raised above the ordinary temptations to falsehood and deception by liberal salaries.

It is indeed a grave practical error of the Board to hold that all cases of insanity have an acute stage in which if medical treatment be given them one-half will be cured. Much more than half of those added to the number of the insane each year have never presented this acute stage, and are equally certain to prove incurable whether with or without medical treatment. Nor is there any practical difficulty in determining which these cases are. Of the yearly admissions to our asylums at least one-half are recognized as without reasonable hope of recovery at the time they are admitted, or after a few weeks' observation. This early separation of the curable and incurable insane has long been carried out in other countries, and is in fact the key to that problem of the relief of our over-crowded asylums which the Board has so long endeavored to solve. We believe they will seek in vain for its solution while they hold that "the accommodations for the acute insane are inadequate to the present requirements," and suppose this to be "fully attested by the fact that the poor-houses and county asylums give shelter to large numbers of this class for whom there is no room in our State institutions." In fact, there is ample room in the hospital asylums of New York, and of most other States, for all the acute insane, and all of the chronic class who, for various reasons, require a similar care. The first step in asylum reform should be to remove from these asylums all the cases unnecessary or improper to be maintained in them, and to forbid the admission of others of the same class. Such are now admitted and retained simply for the money which they bring to support a system of extravagant and corrupt expenditures. We hope that the report of the Comptroller has done something to bring the Board to this conclusion.

The next effort for asylum reform in New York was the result of discussions and formal resolutions by the Medico-Legal and Neurological Societies of New York City. In March, 1878, a resolution was introduced into the Legislature, ordering an investigation of the lunatic asylums of the State. Among these was specially mentioned the asylum at Utica, against which, as declared in the memorial accompanying the resolution, "grave charges had been made, by responsible and competent persons." These charges were contained in an editorial in the *N. Y. Medical Record*, of Feb. 2, 1878, which was partially based upon facts given in a review of "Bucknill's Notes on Asylums for the Insane in America," in the number of this journal for October, 1877. The editorial was an elaborate analysis of the reports of the Utica Asylum for eleven years (1866-76), and a comparison of its expenditures with those of a large number of other asylums of the highest class, throughout the United States. It afforded indisputable proofs of enormous extravagance in the

expenditures of that asylum, and startling evidences of deception in its financial accounts. These charges were substantially confessed by desperate efforts to prevent a legislative investigation of them. One of these efforts was the publication in the newspapers of the report of a Committee of the State Board of Charities, directed to examine into the administration of the lunatic asylums of the State. No charges were before the committee and no witnesses or books were examined at Utica, but questions as to methods, duties of officers, and the like, were addressed to Dr. Gray, whose replies were so satisfactory as to gain the confidence of the committee in his administration "both medical and financial." There was no medical man on the committee—indeed, to its great misfortune, there has never been one on the Board—and their approval of the medical administration can have but little weight. As to the finances of the asylum, which were the sole foundation of the charges of the *Record*, the committee declare, explicitly, that "they did not go into an examination of the accounts, as that would have been a duty entirely beyond their strength and time." To urge such a report as a plea against the investigation of charges of enormous expenditures concealed by a deceptive system of keeping accounts, could hardly be deemed less than a confession. Yet for the asylum ring, as yet unscathed, in combination with the broken but still powerful canal and prison rings, this excuse proved sufficient for its purpose.

The agitation of this subject in the Legislature of 1878 was, however, the cause of a most important step in the progress of asylum reform. Near the close of the session, a law was enacted providing for an examination, by the Comptroller, into the financial and business affairs of the State charitable institutions. The main facts gathered by this examination appear in the special report of the Comptroller, but some of them are given in his annual report, published at the beginning of the year. In this he renews, with additional emphasis, the recommendation contained in his report of last year, "that the receipts of our charitable institutions be covered into the treasury of the State, and that an appropriation sufficiently large be made for their maintenance." After describing a case of outrageous extravagance, accidentally detected in one of the State asylums, the Comptroller says:

"Another case deserving criticism is brought to light in one of the State institutions, which publishes a *Journal of Insanity*. This paper has been published for many years, and from an account rendered to this department, at my request, I learn that since 1850 its bills have been paid out of the funds of the institution to the amount of \$17,092.42. Up to 1856 the institution received from the paper, \$670.53. Since 1856, or for twenty-two years, the treasurer reports no receipts from the paper, but says: 'I have understood and believe that they have been spent in editorial services, and the purchase of books for the asylum libra-

ries.' It would seem then that one at least of our charitable institutions not only has large miscellaneous receipts, the vouchers for the expenditure of which never come to this department, but that it has receipts the amount of which its own treasurer cannot state, and the vouchers to account for which he never sees. It would be difficult to properly stigmatize such loose management."

In another place, the Comptroller renews a recommendation made in his report for the previous year, as follows :

"I would recommend for your consideration the policy of abolishing all local boards of trustees, and the erection of a system by which the different institutions shall be managed by one controlling power. As it is, the responsibility for loose and expensive management is not centered in any one. If we are to look for improvement it can only be found in establishing a fixed and definite responsibility in place of the present plan where there is, practically, no accountability."

A resolution embodying these views was introduced into the Senate during the late session, but was tabled on the motion of the senator from the Utica district, and failed to become a law. According to custom, this senator selects the three managers of the Asylum nominated by the Governor to the Senate each year. As stepping-stones for aspiring politicians, and as shelves for decayed ones, as well as favorable points for gaining access to the State treasury, these managerships are much valued. Thus the asylum boards are made up of local politicians, by whom the interests of the State and the insane are as little considered as abstract justice by an advocate in a legal contest. The appointment of politicians from both parties to these boards, instead of making them non-partisan, as was intended has made them doubly partisan, and almost impregnable. Excellent as the recommendations of the Comptroller seem to be, they have little chance of being adopted at present.

The special report of the Comptroller upon the charitable institutions of the State, whatever may be its immediate effects, is certain, we think, to mark an epoch in the history of the State asylums. Their financial and other statistics, from the beginning, are tabulated with such admirable method and accuracy as to furnish complete data for investigation and reform. With what infinite labor this task has been accomplished, the readers of the JOURNAL who have followed its exposures of the deceptions, concealments, and juggling with figures of the Utica asylum, will partly appreciate. We shall only say, that the report presents in a light more striking than they have yet been seen, the marvelous extravagance of the hospital asylums. Lack of space forbids us to follow it in detail, but it is only just to our readers to copy the following contrast of the financial administration of the asylum at Northampton, Mass., with that at Utica, in proof of the correctness of our criticisms of the latter :

"It appears from the report of the Superintendent of the

Utica Asylum that for the year ending November 30th, 1878, there was received from sundry counties for patients' board, clothing, and miscellaneous expenses, the sum of \$101,946.51; from sundry private patients, \$54,805.57, making a total of \$156,752.08 received from counties and private patients. Dividing this sum by 600, the average number of patients for the year, we find that the average amount received for each patient was \$261.25, or a trifle over five dollars per week, as against three dollars seventy cents and eight mills at Northampton. To this latter sum, however, should be added a few cents, not to exceed twenty, to cover the amount received for clothing and damages from town and private patients. It therefore appears that for the year 1878 the amount received on account of patients was at least a dollar and ten cents per capita per week more at Utica than at Northampton; or stated for the year, the amount received at Utica from counties and private patients was \$57.25 per capita more than was received from corresponding sources at Northampton. The excess of receipts from these sources at Utica over Northampton was greater, rather than less than this amount, for the twelve years preceding 1878, yet we find that while at Northampton during the years 1866 to 1878 inclusive, every expense, including repairs and improvements to the extent of \$156,701.31, has been met out of the receipts from patients, the Utica Asylum, with its receipts from this source \$57.25 per capita for the year greater than at Northampton, has received from the State, during the thirteen years from 1866 to 1878 inclusive, the same period covered by the figures given above, \$156,159.37 for salaries and \$384,886.71 for additions, alterations, repairs and other purposes, making a total of \$541,046.08 received from the State, in addition to the amount received on account of board of patients. This contrast appears the more striking, when it is reflected that the excess of receipts from patients, \$57.25 per capita multiplied by the average number of inmates in the Utica Asylum for 1878, produces the sum of \$34,350 for that single year."

When to this excess of \$34,350 in the receipts of the Utica asylum for maintenance in a single year is added the further average sum of \$41,619 received from the State treasury for salaries and for repairs and improvements, the total (\$75,969) is so large that without the fullest explanation it will be classed with the sums expended on account of the canals and prisons of the State before the days of reform. The entire excess, for maintenance and for repairs, etc., in the Utica expenditures, has amounted to a little more than a million of dollars in the past fifteen years. It cannot be the true friends of the State charities, or even of the Utica asylum, who combine to stifle inquiry into such an accusation as is contained in these figures.

For its permanent value as a reference, we shall also copy from this report a tabular statement of the total cost of support per patient in each of twenty asylums of the highest class, for the



year 1877. It will be seen that in the asylums at Poughkeepsie and Middletown, the cost is even greater than at Utica. But neither of these asylums is completed, and their expenditures are a less perfect index of their management than those of the parent institution. The table shows that the total cost per patient at Utica for 1877, was almost exactly double that at Northampton. This is a difference of \$110,000 against the expenditures of the former asylum for the year. A comparison of the maintenance accounts of the two institutions shows an excess of \$71,744 in those of the Utica asylum for an equal number of patients, and when we consider that at Northampton the cost of the principal supplies is from five to ten per cent. greater than at Utica, the difference is relatively increased.

NAME OF INSTITUTION.	Average number of patients.	Annual cost per capita excluding repairs.	Annual cost per capita including repairs.
1. Asylum for the Insane, Toronto, Ontario.....	651	\$128 30	\$133 39
2. Asylum for the Insane, Brattleboro, Vermont.....	472	136 07	150 77
3. Asylum for the Insane, London, Ontario.....	604	136 84	140 20
4. Hospital for the Insane, Halifax, Nova Scotia.....	347	140 46	154 27
5. State Lunatic Asylum, Jackson, Mississippi.....	350	161 34	167 58
6. Hospital for the Insane, Dayton, Ohio.....	571	161 88	166 00
7. State Lunatic Hospital, Taunton, Mass. ....	727	162 81	194 90
8. State Lunatic Hospital, Northampton, Mass. ....	476	166 34	183 72
9. Hospital for the Insane, Cleveland, Ohio.....	577	170 35	177 19
10. Hospital for the Insane, St. Peters, Minn. ....	563	177 77	180 60
11. Central Insane Asylum, Jacksonville, Ill. ....	487	185 52	217 81
12. Government Hospital for the Insane, Washington, D. C. ....	770	202 69	213 64
13. Hospital for the Insane, Oshkosh, Wis. ....	542	206 11	216 92
14. Maine Insane Hospital, Augusta, Me. ....	411	208 49	219 45
15. State Lunatic Asylum, Harrisburg, Pa. ....	434	213 93	231 50
16. Hospital for the Insane, Middletown, Conn. ....	463	226 24	240 34
17. Hospital for the Insane, Catonsville, Md. ....	245	235 15	246 01
18. State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, N. Y. ....	608	283 96	362 53
19. Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y. ....	219	353 20	365 59
20. State Homœopathic Asylum, Middletown, N. Y. ....	109	419 75	431 14

The argument for the "curative policy" in the care of the insane, which we have noticed in the report of the State Board of Charities, the Comptroller terms "an ingenious argument for high-priced management," and thoroughly demolishes. He shows that, in New York, "since 1850, during the very period when the cost of asylum management has so largely increased, there has been a steady decrease in the reported recoveries." After quoting on this point from a "Report on Insanity," read before the Conference of Public Charities in 1877, he says:

"Dr. Chapin's deductions are more than confirmed by further investigation. The Utica Asylum was opened in 1843. The percentage of recoveries for the first five years of its existence, based on its average population, was 49½. The percentage of recoveries on the average population for the last five years has been 22½. The difference is not so striking when the comparison is made of the percentage of recoveries based on admissions, but in this case also the percentage is much smaller for the last five years than for the first five years in the life of the institution. On the other hand, the percentage of deaths, whether based on the whole number treated, or on the average population, has been larger for the past five years than for the first five years after the opening of the asylum, yet, in the intervening time the expenses have doubled."

Dr. Earle's able "Studies relative to the Curability of Insanity," published in his last annual report, are quoted in confirmation of these deductions. This veteran inquirer finds that the McLean Asylum, at Somerville, Mass., with an immense increase "in the elegancies of accommodation, and a nearly sevenfold augmentation of current expenses," reports a ratio of recoveries diminished sixty-one per cent. between the years 1840 and 1875. This really proves nothing so much as that the cases now placed in asylums differ very greatly from those of former years. But at least it "effectually disposes of the argument for a high rate of expenditure, based on the theory of increased curative results," as the Comptroller believes.

The misleading financial statements which appear, year after year, in the reports of the Utica Asylum, and especially in its returns to the State Board of Charities, are treated by the Comptroller with a fine irony which is very effective. He says:

"It is not a necessary inference that there existed an intention to mislead. The trouble is as likely to have been that the person making the report, or furnishing the figures, *failed to bear in mind the object of publishing them*. Yet it may be that, in some cases, a desire to avoid an appearance of extravagance has led to such a purposed arrangement of figures as should not enable the general reader to gain a full knowledge of the subject."

We have before shown\* how conscious and deliberate are these deceptive arrangements of figures in the accounts of the

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\* Vol. II., page 782.

asylum referred to, and that they have amounted at times to \$50,000 in the statement of its weekly cost per patient for a single year. And we may observe here that the only explanation which has been offered, within our knowledge, of its enormous expenditures, is destroyed by this report. It has been suggested that a medical and philanthropic fanaticism for the insane inspires the administration of the Utica Asylum. But the Comptroller finds, by a careful examination, that this extravagance does not reach the patients. Besides, if the suggested explanation were the true one, we should find the representatives of the Asylum glorying in their extravagance, and not concealing it by false returns, or manipulating Legislatures to prevent an investigation.

It would be a pleasure to add the thoroughly fair and sensible remarks, with which this valuable report concludes, on the necessity of economy in the use of money for charitable purposes, and especially in the cost of asylum buildings. But we must hasten to the latest incident in the history of asylum reform in New York.

On the 8th of May last, several well-known medical gentlemen of New York City appeared, according to invitation, before a committee of the Senate at Albany, to give the facts and reasons upon which had been based a petition for the investigation of the State insane asylums. That petition was published in the last number of the JOURNAL, with the comment that the statements made in it with respect to the management, medical, financial and administrative, of these asylums, were serious, and that the fullest examination of them should be made. This opinion was only partially concurred in by the superintendents. They deemed the charges serious enough, as it would seem, but were strongly opposed to an investigation. This view they were permitted to present to the committee in a formal hearing, before the charges against them were heard, and with complete success. The committee, whose leading member was the senator from the Utica district, reported against the petitioners, and the dreaded inquiry was once more avoided.

The first series of charges were directed to the administration of the asylums. They accuse the superintendents of gross neglect of duties which they are liberally paid by the State to perform, and of some serious abuses in the treatment of the insane. In no way could a confession of the general truth of these charges have been more clearly made, than by the efforts put forth to prevent their investigation. But it would be wrong to suppose that all the superintendents were equally guilty, or that there were none who were quite guiltless of these offences. Some, we are sure, were moved by an *esprit de corps* arising from fellow-membership in a narrow and exclusive society, still governed by the spirit and traditions of the last century. We believe that these gentlemen have done a serious wrong to the public and to the medical profession not only, but to themselves.

Their absolute and irresponsible control of asylums is already lost, and no attempts to shield their methods from public and professional criticism, or their unworthy members from reproach, can long avail. Of the truth of this the better class of asylum superintendents, who are largely in the majority, should be assured.

The second series of charges relate especially to the professional qualifications of the superintendents. That not any of them are qualified according to the standard of the petitioners, is no doubt true, and it is quite impossible that it should be otherwise, under the present organization of asylums. Each superintendent is now practically the steward of his institution more than its physician, and to these functions, as the Comptroller has pointed out, is unfortunately added that of lobbyist. In our opinion he is in general much less blameworthy for what he has not done in pathological studies, than for making a pretense of them for advertising and lobbying purposes. This offense is plainly charged, and the proofs of the charge are so clear that no medical reader of asylum reports can fail to be convinced. We have before referred\* to Dr. Gray's summary of contributions to the pathology of insanity, after ten years of study, at an annual cost to the State of \$5,000 and upwards. "It is impossible," says Dr. Gray, in opening, "to define the pathology of insanity in distinct terms, as it is still a subject of investigation." Can we hesitate for a moment as to the real value of studies undertaken from such a scientific and logical stand-point? Would it be possible to imagine Dr. Draper or Dr. Dalton at a loss to define any province of physiology, and for the reason that it is still a subject of investigation? What province of physiology or pathology is not still in this state, and what has this fact to do with the task of defining it? We ask the reader's pardon for dwelling an instant on so obvious a point, but it furnishes a true key to the entire field of Dr. Gray's "researches," which have filled from twenty to forty pages of each of his annual reports for many years. They consist of a description of degenerative changes found in the brains of the insane, which have long ago been proved to have no definite relation to mental disorder. Thus they are as far from having any value in the pathology of insanity as a description of the same changes in the brains of inebriates—where they are also found—would have in a pathology of inebriety.

But it is not necessary to dwell longer upon so unpleasant a subject. We are aware that it will be admitted by those even who consider themselves the special friends of asylums and the insane, that these so-called "studies" are not really serious, but intended solely for popular and legislative reading. There can be no doubt of this fact in the mind of any physician who has been fairly grounded in the principles of medical science. But

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\* Vol. III., page 352.

we must again warn medical superintendents that the public mind, at the present day, can be only temporarily controlled by "arguments" of this sort. Its reasoning, though but partly conscious and articulate, finally leads to just, practical conclusions. Enlightened public opinion, indeed, is the only ground of real and permanent reform; and when it shall have become fully understood that such delicate and responsible public duties as the care of the insane are committed to officials exercising absolute authority, accountable to no one for their expenditures, and openly combined to resist all attempts at investigation, asylum reform will be no longer delayed.

In conclusion, we shall present a resumé of the changes in asylum organization and management, suggested by the movement for reform now in progress in New York, and by our own observation and experience:

1. To abandon the theory of asylums which considers them chiefly as lunacy-cures, established for the benefit of local interests, and to be maintained by lobbying and advertising.

2. To abolish the local boards of trustees, and adopt a system of State management for State institutions, with a single responsible head, in place of the present formal management.

3. To devolve the medical and general supervision of asylums upon the State Board of Charities, which should be composed in large part of physicians.

4. To enact a law similar to that providing for the removal of trustees of savings banks for abuses of trust, so that commissioners or trustees, charged with the supervision of asylums, and neglecting or abusing their trusts, might be summarily removed.

5. The enforcement of a law never carried into effect, authorizing the admission of private patients into asylums only when there are vacant places not required for public patients; and the charging of a uniform price of maintenances to both these classes, instead of leaving, as now, the price to be paid by private patients at the discretion of the superintendent. L. A. T.

## II.—DURET: CEREBRAL TRAUMATISMS, &c.

ÉTUDES EXPÉRIMENTALES ET CLINIQUES SUR LES TRAUMATISMES CÉRÉBRAUX. Par le Dr. H. Duret. Paris, 1878. Pp. 369.  
(*Experimental and clinical studies of cerebral traumatisms.*)

(Continued from January No.)

In explaining the temporary tetanic symptoms which some times follow a severe blow on the head of an animal, some interesting remarks are made, which may have a wider range of application than the author seems to have given them. At any